



AN UPDATE FROM THE ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

Summer 1992 Vol. 3 No. 2

## Expansion Approved

On May 8, the Natural Resources Conservation Board released its decision on the expansion of the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre. Chem-Security (Alberta) Ltd., operators of the centre, had sought approval from the Board for an additional incinerator with a capacity of 40 000 tonnes per year. That expansion would more than triple the existing capacity of 13 500 tonnes per year.

The application was considered at hearings in November 1991, and in January and March of this year, with some opposition being voiced by native and environmental groups.

The Swan Hills Expansion Review Coalition, a group of environmental organizations, questioned the need for the expansion and suggested that it be delayed in favour of more concentration on waste reduction initiatives. A number of Indian First Nations in the region, the Edmonton Friends of the North Society, and the Alberta Trappers' Association opposed the expansion, feeling that sufficient waste volumes would not be available and expressing concern over potential environmental effects.

### PROJECT WELCOMED

The Town of Swan Hills, however, supported the application, welcoming the potential benefit to the local economy.

After reviewing the various submissions, the Board concluded that – after taking into account the potential social, economic, and environmental effects – the proposal to expand the Centre would

be in the public interest. More specifically, it determined that there is a need for the expansion and that the project is technically feasible and economically viable.

Its findings stated:

*The project need not adversely affect waste minimization efforts. The probable effects on the health of the public and of workers at the plant and on the environment would be sufficiently small to be acceptable.*

*The applicant has a well-conceived and effective plan in place to deal with emergencies, including accidental spills of material which may be hazardous. The economic effects of the expansion on the Town of Swan Hills and surrounding region would be beneficial and any adverse social effects would be minimal.*

Subject to a number of conditions (including re-examination of some technical components) the Board approved the application under the authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

### TIMETABLE FOR EXPANSION OF THE ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE TREATMENT CENTRE

- \* Summer 1992: Earthwork and site preparation commences
- \* Spring 1993: Site preparation complete. Kiln construction begins.
- \* April 1994: Estimated date for project completion.
- \* September – December 1994: Estimated completion of commissioning process. (A minimum of six months required.)
- \* Spring 1995: Expanded Treatment Centre operational for treatment of commercial waste.

## Digging for Answers

Unexpectedly high quantities of potentially hazardous materials are ending up in Drayton Valley's municipal landfill, according to a study commissioned by the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, the Town of Drayton Valley and the Municipal District of Brazeau.

The study was conducted by a team of researchers under the direction of Chris Zeiss, Ph.D., P. Eng., Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Alberta.

It discovered, among other things, that the volume of hazardous material in the landfill is over four per cent more

*Produced quarterly by the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, "In Our Backyard" is intended to keep Albertans updated on issues and solutions in hazardous waste management. You can contribute to the process by "recycling" this newsletter. Pass it on to a friend with your comments. And should you have suggestions you wish to share, pass them on to us. Our address, phone and fax number are on Page 4.*



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than amounts found in previous studies which were conducted in urban areas in British Columbia and the United States. The study also shows that householders share equal responsibility with industrial, commercial and institutional generators for the hazardous waste that reaches the landfill.

## TRANSFER STATION

*"The study was conducted in answer to questions we had about whether or not to host a special waste transfer station," says Tom McGee, Mayor of Drayton Valley. "The results show that hazardous material is a significant component of the waste stream in our landfill and that the time is right to further investigate the feasibility of locating a transfer station here."*

To arrive at those results, Chris Zeiss and his team of researchers analysed two hundred and sixty-six samples, obtained from the landfill during four one-week sampling periods in spring, summer, fall and winter. The results showed that potentially hazardous materials, including containers, made up 6.7 per cent of the refuse. The actual residue in the containers amounted to 1.2 per cent.

The sources of waste examined by the team was particularly interesting. Householders were responsible for 42 per cent, while industrial, commercial and institutional generators contributed 58 per cent. Overall, the waste consisted of commonly-used products – such as oil and filters, paints, bathroom cleaners, waxes and polishes, laundry and dishwasher products, cosmetics and hair

sprays, adhesives and batteries. There was no indication that extremely toxic substances were being disposed of in the landfill.

## EDUCATION NEEDED

Since this was the first study to focus on a resource-based community in a rural location, the results are expected to prove helpful to communities similar to Drayton Valley. It also confirms the need for Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation's program of public information.

*"The study highlights the need for continued education on the constituents of waste, waste minimization, and safe disposal options for hazardous materials and waste,"* says Ken J. Simpson, President of the Corporation.

*"While many programs exist to help generators minimize and manage their*

*hazardous waste, our challenge is to continually make that information available to the public. The Drayton Valley results are already building awareness of the problem there and in other rural communities. We're hoping that this example will raise awareness among Albertans of the need for individual participation in their communities' hazardous waste management efforts."*

## WHAT NEXT?

The Drayton Valley study has prompted further research into the whole area of rural waste disposal and management. The Chris Zeiss team has already expressed interest in a project intended to assess potential leaching from this and similar landfills. And a pilot program has been proposed to examine the possibility of a special waste collection depot in Drayton Valley.



*U of A researchers sort garbage at the Drayton Valley landfill.*

# ASWMC's Jay Nagendran is first Canadian honoured by American Academy of Environmental Engineers

At a ceremony in Washington D.C., in April, Environmental Manager Jay Nagendran was presented with an Honor Award for Excellence in Environmental Engineering by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers. The award is presented annually for environmental engineering projects which excel in quality, originality or complexity and which contribute to social and economic advancement.

Jay was recognized for his work on

industrial wastewater management and river clean-up in Indonesia. Seconded to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), he spent a nine-month leave in 1989 helping to set new environmental standards for the Southeast Asian country. In the first two years of the clean river program, more than 600 industries agreed to improve waste water treatment to meet the standards, and over 250 of them have already completed the changes.



*Indonesia's waterways are prime targets for environmental cleanup.*



# Educating Ourselves about Waste

by Janyne Sinclair, Coordinator Community Relations

*To respond to the questions we hear most frequently at ASWMC, we've turned over this page in every issue to Community Relations coordinator Janyne Sinclair. If you have a particular concern about managing special wastes, we'd like to hear from you.*

## WHAT IS SPECIAL WASTE?

Special waste is any material that needs special handling to keep it from harming people or the environment. Such ordinary household items as nail polish, cleaning fluids, solvents and paints, automotive supplies and garden-care materials contain substances which can cause personal injury or damage to the environment unless used and disposed of safely.

Special handling means identifying these wastes, handling them safely, keeping them separate from other wastes, and selecting a method of disposal that will not harm the environment, now or in the future.

## IS 'SPECIAL' WASTE DIFFERENT FROM HAZARDOUS WASTE?

All hazardous materials are special wastes in the sense that they require special handling and treatment. Generally speaking, however, the term is applied to materials not considered hazardous until the time of disposal.

Special waste contains substances which may not be considered hazardous in the form in which they are used but which *can* contaminate sewers and landfills. Thus, household products like furniture polish, air fresheners, nail polish, motor oil, septic tank degreasers, and wood preservatives, become 'special' wastes requiring special handling and treatment.

## WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT SPECIAL WASTE?

We encourage people that the best way to clean up the mess ... is to make less. So you can start by minimizing your use of products which create special wastes. The labels of all household products with potentially-dangerous chemical characteristics display one or more of the following warning symbols:



Poison



Flammable



Explosive



Corrosive

The border shape of the symbols indicates the degree of hazard:



Danger



Warning



Caution

You'll notice that the classification symbols on household products differ slightly from commercial and industrial symbols, which are based on classifications from the federal Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and Regulations:



Flammable



Corrosive



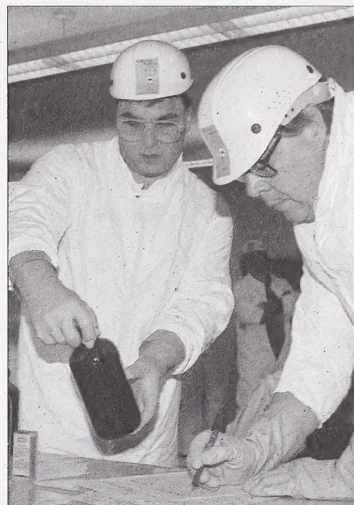
Oxidizing



Poisonous

Waste from *any* product bearing a hazard symbol or from unlabelled material that is flammable, corrosive, explosive/reactive or toxic should be safely stored and taken to a Toxic Round Up. (More about Toxic Round Up in a future issue.)

## You write . . .



I note with interest the picture of Mr. Kowalski and two other individuals working with chemicals. ("In Our Backyard" Spring edition.) In our industry, we do not recognize ordinary eye glasses, which Mr. Kowalski is wearing, or safety glasses with side shields, as adequate protection when working with chemicals. We wear chemical goggles. Open collars on their protective coveralls is not a good practice, either. Finally, Mr. Kowalski should have the elasticized upper cuffs of his gloves *inside* his sleeves. (The man to his right has done it properly.) I think that part of your training program fell a bit short.

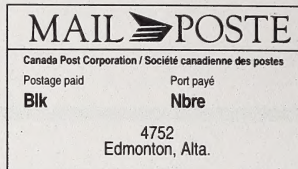
R.J. HARRINGTON  
NOWSCO Well Service Ltd.

*Truth is, in our eagerness to seize a photo opportunity, we goofed – and our thanks go to Mr. Harrington for pointing out proper procedures. For the record, full safety precautions were followed throughout. Our V.I.P. helpers were working outside the chemical handling area on documentation. – Ed.*



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MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**  
610 - 10909 Jasper Ave.  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5J 3J9



On June 1st, the Alberta Foundation for Environmental Excellence hosted the first annual Emerald Awards Dinner at the Edmonton Convention Centre. For its efforts in fostering the knowledge, values, and consumption habits that will ensure the continuation of a healthy environment, the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation was honoured with the Emerald Award in the Communities & Government Category.

## Alternatives

### HAVE A SAFER SUMMER

Summertime cleaning, decorating and gardening usually involves a variety of household chemicals. And, too often, the residues are poured down the drain or dumped in the garbage, endangering the environment. For a safer summer, try these alternatives:

#### Drain Declogger

Toss in one or two handfuls of bicarbonate of soda followed by 100 ml of vinegar. Allow to sit for an hour, then run water through.



#### Glass, Plastic Cleaner

Make your own cleaning spray with 30 ml of vinegar in one litre of water.

#### Chrome, Stainless Steel Cleaner

Dip a dry cloth in flour and rub on surface.

#### Air Freshener

Leave an open box of baking soda or a dish of vinegar in the room.

#### Moth Repellent

Sprinkle cedar wood chips in your storage box or trunk.

#### Garden Insecticide

Mist leaves with soapy water. Or try diatomaceous earth (ground up microscopic plants which clog the insects' pores).

## CALL DIRECT:

#### ▲ For information on:

- Hazardous Waste Management Programs in Alberta
  - Toxic Round-Ups
  - Community Study Groups
  - Used Oil Programs
  - Waste Minimization
- ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**  
1-800-272-8873  
422-5029 (Edmonton)  
428-9627 (Fax)

- ▲ For information on the transportation of dangerous goods:
- ALBERTA PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**  
1-800-272-9600  
(24 Hours)

- ▲ For a directory of waste management companies in Alberta:
- ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA**  
424-6384 (Edmonton)  
HOTLINE  
(for small businesses)  
1-800-661-WASTE (9278)

#### ▲ For information on:

- Recycling: Newspaper, Metals, Plastics, Clothing
- RECYCLING BRANCH, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT**  
427-5838 (Edmonton)  
297-5925 (Calgary)

- ▲ To report an environmental

emergency or to register a complaint:

**POLLUTION CONTROL DIVISION, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT**  
1-800-222-6514

- ▲ To access the clearing house that puts potential users of waste materials in contact with waste producers:
- ALBERTA WASTE MATERIALS EXCHANGE**  
450-5408 (Edmonton)

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610 - 10909 Jasper Ave.  
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